

SMITH LAYS STONE FOR TALLEST TOWER

5,000 Witness Ceremony as
Former Governor Wields Trowel
at Empire State Building.

RECORDS SEALED IN BLOCK

Head of Company Traces History of
Site on Which 85-Story Office
Structure Is Being Erected.

The cornerstone of the Empire State Building, the tallest structure ever to be built by man, the construction of which is nearing its highest point, 1,248 feet above the ground, on the site of the old Waldorf-Astoria at Fifth Avenue and Thirty-fourth Street, was laid yesterday by former Governor Alfred E. Smith, president of Empire State, Inc.

A crowd of 5,000 persons, half of whom were workers on the building, swarmed around Mr. Smith as he manipulated a silver trowel, cementing the 4,500-pound semi-circular stone into place. The Swedish granite block, hardest and heaviest of any species of granite, was 2½ feet thick and 6 feet in diameter, with a highly polished block surface.

A copper box, placed within the stone, contained a history of the building and the company erecting it; samples of the coinage and paper currency of 1930 in all denominations from 1 cent to a \$100 bill; photographs of the officers of the building company, the architects and contractors, and a rag paper edition of THE NEW YORK TIMES of Sept. 9, 1930.

Facing a battery of cameras, the former Governor, himself a member of the bricklayers' union, spoke briefly of the history of the plot of ground occupied by the structure while friendly taunts, as he wielded his trowel, came from scores of workers perched perilously on steel beams and scaffolding above him.

"Since the advent of the movie camera, the radio and other means of communicating sound," he said, "the laying of a cornerstone of a public building today becomes somewhat of a photographic gallery performance. In the copper box here are certain articles of value indicating the trend of the time. If this building is ever demolished to make way for a greater building the people of that day can read pretty accurately the history of this day."

Mr. Smith traced the history of the plot from the time when it formed the outskirts of the Thompson farm eighty years ago, to the days of the Astor residence on the site and the location of the Waldorf-Astoria. The building, he announced, would be completed on May 1, 1931.

Answering humorous criticism and remarks on his masonry from the workers, one of whom asked if there was "any chance of putting the Eighteenth Amendment in" the copper box, Mr. Smith said:

"So that there will be no mistake or misunderstanding about it, I declare, and firmly, that I have a right to use this trowel as a member of the union. My dues are all paid and I have my card in my office at 200 Madison Avenue."

The cornerstone was set into the masonry on the left side of the great entrance arch on the Fifth Avenue side. A similar stone had been set on the right side of the supporting masonry. The building will be eighty-five stories above the street and will have two stories below grade. The mooring mast, extending 200 feet above the eighty-fifth floor, will make the structure 1,248 feet high, equivalent to 102 stories of eleven feet each. The cost of the land and building will be \$55,000,000.

Among those present at the ceremonies were Mrs. Alfred E. Smith, Robert H. Shreve and William F. Lamb of Shreve, Lamb & Harmon, architects of the building; Colonel Paul Starrett, president, and Andrew Eken, vice president of Starrett Brothers & Eken, contractors; Alfred E. Smith Jr. and the following officers and directors of Empire State, Inc.: Robert C. Brown, vice president; J. Halloway Tarry, secretary; Pierre S. du Pont, Ellis P. Earle, Michael Friedsam, August Heckscher, Louis G. Kaufman and John J. Raskob, directors.



Times Wide World Photo.

LAYING CORNERSTONE OF EMPIRE STATE BUILDING.

Former Governor Alfred E. Smith and Mrs. Smith at the Ceremony
Held Yesterday on the Site of the Old Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.